(b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Maintenance and repair of National Highways in West Bengal

1093. SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the requirement of funds for maintenance and repair of National Highway in West Bengal, as proposed by the State Government for years 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96;

(b) the funds released by Government against the above proposals; and

(c) whether any contingency funds are available for strengthening/repairing of the distressed streches of National Highways in West Bengal, during floods and other calamities?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) and (b) Funds for maintenance and repairs of National Highways demanded by the State Govt. of West Bengal and funds allocated by the Government for the last three years is indicated below:

(Rs. in lakhs)

Year	Demand	Allotment
1993-94	3227.80	1760.45
1994-95	2901.54	1744.02
1995-96	3266.20	1731.33

(c) Out of total allocation available for the maintenance and repair of National Highways in a particular year, funds are also provided for the repair of flood damage or other special repairs needed as per condition of National Highways in various States, including the State of West Bengal.

Taking over of closed Textile Units by Labour Cooperatives

1094. SMT. URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of labour cooperatives which have made demand to take over closed viable textile units in Gujarat and other States of the country;

(b) the number of the cooperatives which have been given permission to start production;

(c) the number of cooperatives which have started production in those units; and

(d) the amount sanctioned to support the labour cooperatives and released for the individual projects?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) to (d) Matter comes under the purview of concerned State Governments.

Improving Indo-Sri Lankan relations

1095. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister visited India in the month of June and sought India's help and aid to rebuilt Jaffna;

(b) if so, the main subjects discussed;

(c) whether the relations between the two countries has been further improved;

(d) whether all the outstanding disputes with Sri Lanka have been discussed and both the countries have agreed to help each other and improve the relations; and

(e) if so, to what extent?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) Yes, Sir. The Sri Lankan Foreign Minister paid a two day goodwill visit to India on June 20-21, 1996. He conveyed a briefing on the relief and rehabilitation programme being carried out by the Sri Lankan Government in the Jaffna peninsula and sought India's assistance and support for the same. Earlier an Action Plan prepared by the Sri Lankan government for relief and resettlement and rehabilitation programme for the Jaffna peninsula which had interalia, called for international assistance was handed over to selected countries including India.

(b) to (e) The Sri Lankan Foreign Minister was informed that India would be prepared to extend all feasible assistance for relief and rehabilitation of the refugees.

During the discussions with the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, there was a wide-ranging discussion on all issues of mutual interest. While expressing satisfaction at the existing state of bilateral cooperation, it was agreed that there were possibilities of further enhancing ties. It was agreed that Sri Lanka would host the third session of Indo-Sri Lanka Joint Commission later this year. Prior to the Joint Commission, it is proposed to convene meetings of the sub-Commissions on Science & Technology and Social, Cultural and Educational matters in Colombo. The Joint Commission would review the progress made in various spheres of bilateral cooperation and would also identify new areas of cooperation. Discussions were also held on improving ties in the economic field. The question of fisheries and problems faced by fishermen of the two countries was also discussed and the two sides agreed to hold consultations to resolve these problems expeditiously. Both India and Sri Lanka emphasised the high priority given to maintenance of close and cordial bilateral relations and reiterated their commitment to further enhance bilateral cooperation in all fields.

Villages without Post Offices

1096. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the district-wise number of villages in the State of Punjab without post office by the 1995-96 and as on date;

(b) the district-wise number of villages in the State having post office, category-wise; and

(c) the district-wise and category-wise number of post offices proposed to be opened during the year 1996-97?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) The district-wise number of villages in the State of Punjab without Post Offices by the end of 1995-96 and as on date in given in Statement-I (*See* below).

(b) The district-wise number of villages in the State having post offices, category-wise is given in Statement-II (*See* below).

(c) It is proposed to open 2 Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices and 4 Departmental Sub Post Offices under Annual Plan, 1996-97 in Punjab. The district-wise target are not allocated as the Post Offices are opened on norm based justification and merits of each case.

Statement I

District-wise number of villages without Post Offices by the end of 1995-96 & to date

S. No.	Name of District	Number of villages without Post Offices
1.	Ludhiana	513
2.	Fatehgarh Sahib	103
3.	Patiala	1209
4.	Ropar	735
5.	Sangrur	476
6.	Amritsar	779
7.	Bhatinda	146
8.	Faridkot	254
9.	Ferozepur	851
10.	Gurdaspur	1299
11.	Hoshiarpur	1198
12.	Jalandhar	837
13.	Kapurthala	516
14.	Mansa	155
	Total	9071

Statement II

District-wise number of Villages in the state having Post Offices (Category-wise) in Punjab Circle (DSOs, EDSOs & EDBOs)

S. No.	Name of District	Number of Villages with post office	DSOs *	EDSOs **	EDBOs ***
1.	Ludhiana	337	63	—	274
2.	Fatehgarh Sahib	65	10	—	55
3.	Patiala	189	6	—	183
4.	Ropar	161	19	2	140
5.	Sangrur	234	10	—	224
6.	Amritsar	424	42	3	379
7.	Bhatinda	137	7	—	130
8.	Faridkot	319	25	—	294
9.	Ferozepur	272	17	1	254
10.	Gurdaspur	245	24	1	220
11.	Hoshiarpur	393	48	—	345
12.	Jalandhar	403	47	1	355
13.	Mansa	86	6	—	80
14.	Kapurthala	117	19	—	98
	Total	3382	343	8	3031

* Departmental Sub Post Offices.
** Extra Departmental Sub Post Offices.
*** Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices.